

# Creating Content that Sells:

## Content Marketing for Demand Generation

**Content marketing is more important than ever. The B2B buying process has changed, and so has the B2B buyer. Gone are the days when salespeople actively “sold” to prospects and marketers would participate in “interruption marketing”—doing their best to get in front of prospective customers regardless of their level of interest or qualification.**

### **Content Marketing:**

The creation and sharing of content for the purpose of promoting a product or service.

### **Demand Generation:**

The function of a B2B marketing department that creates demand for your product or service.

### **The Need for Content Marketing**

Thanks to the Internet, social media and other major online influences, prospects are spending more time on the Web doing independent research, obtaining information from their peers and other third parties. Companies are meeting prospective buyers earlier than ever, and they must avoid having sales engage with every early-stage lead that is not truly sales ready.

### **Reducing Risk in the B2B buying process**

Research shows that the B2B buying process is a highly emotional one, one that lends itself to irrational behaviors and heuristics, or quick methods of coming to a solution that are, at best, educated guesses. The emotion that most impacts the B2B buyer is fear (e.g. job security, loss of professional credibility, monetary loss, etc.)

While there is organizational risk involved in the process (often stated in the procurement or RFP process), personal risk is what marketers must seek to understand best. This type of personal risk is often unstated, different for each person in the buying committee, and a potential source of internal tensions and ineffective buying processes. Many qualified leads disappear because of personal risk, and when sales and marketing don't acknowledge and tackle this fear, revenue suffers.

B2B marketers must do their best to minimize this fear by eliminating risk, which can be done only through building trust with prospects. Content marketing develops this trust, providing the buyer with information that will help them make the right decision, allowing them to reduce both organizational and personal risk.

### **The Role of Content Marketing in Demand Generation**

Marketo's definition of Content Marketing is “The creation and sharing of content for the purpose of promoting a product or service.” Though the focus of this content may not specifically be about your organization or its offerings, often assets created for the purpose of content marketing include a mix of problem-specific information and thought leadership.

This is because organizations are finding success by increasing awareness and demand for an entire industry, allowing the company to benefit from the expanded market and its increased interest. To be effective, you cannot just focus on the benefits of your product or service, but instead share the business benefits of employing best practices in your industry. Companies that successfully use content marketing will improve their credibility amongst customers and prospects and will be able to claim a larger share of the available market than competitors. This is because they are building trust and rapport with these prospects and customers, making it easier for them to justify purchasing your product.

Content is not just white papers, webinars and web pages. It includes a wide range of information your company uses to educate buyers. This is thought leadership and can include:

- Articles
- Books/eBooks
- Brochures/manuals
- Case Studies
- Information Guides
- Microsites/Web Pages
- Online Courses
- Podcasts/Videocasts
- Presentations
- Product Data Sheets
- Reference Guides
- Resource Libraries

### Six Rules of Content Marketing

1. Non promotional
2. Relevant to Reader
3. Closes a Gap
4. Well-Written
5. Relevant to Your Company
6. Gives Proof

- RSS/XML Feeds
- Videos
- Webinars/Webcasts
- White Papers
- Widgets
- Workbooks

Doug Kessler, Creative Director at Velocity Partners and author of *The B2B Content Marketing Workbook*, provides succinct advice on how to turn organizational thinking into effective content-based marketing campaigns. "Thought Leadership is exploiting your unique position in your markets to generate valuable insight and advice on issues your customers and prospects care most about. Content marketing is turning your insight and advice into campaigns that change people's minds and incite action," says Kessler. This means that the material you use in content marketing should do more than just inform or educate, it should inspire.

### Demand Generation

Demand generation is the function of a B2B marketing department that creates demand for your product or service. This is much more than lead generation, as it also includes the conversations and activities that occur prior to the lead being passed to sales.

Effective content marketing is imperative to demand generation because it helps create product demand. Content affects demand generation in three important ways:

- [Lead Generation](#)
- [Lead Nurturing](#)
- [Lead Scoring](#)

### Lead Generation

A core function of a marketing department is lead generation. For content to be successful for lead generation, it must follow these **six rules of content marketing**:

1. **It is not promotional** – promotional materials will neither excite nor inspire, both critical components of content marketing.
2. **It is relevant** – generic materials that are not highly relevant to a reader will not result in increased success. When writing content you must make sure it will be useful to the reader, regardless of whether it supports your company message.

3. **It closes a gap** – content marketing should answer a business question or problem. Giving people information about topics where there is no need for information will be a wasted effort by the organization.
4. **It is well written** – poorly written thought leadership may not only provide poor results, but may also hurt the company's reputation. Take time to ensure content is presented in a thoughtful manner and is free of errors.
5. **It is relevant to your company** – if the content you create does not support business objectives in any way, it is a waste of resources to produce. Keep business goals in mind when creating content.
6. **It gives proof** – since you write to support a business goal, your content may seem biased. Make sure that content you create gives proof either through quotes and testimonials or through actual metrics and statistics.

While following the steps above will allow you to create good content, good content is not enough. Instead, you must share this content so that it is consumed and information about prospects is gathered.

### Content Promotion

To encourage consumption of this content, you will want to promote it to your prospect database, relevant customers and those in your target demographic. Promotional channels include email campaigns, events and social media. You may also want to do this through paid promotions, including content syndication, Google Adwords or other paid search marketing, email sponsorships, newsletter sponsorships and more.

Promotion is key to the success of your content campaign because if others do not read what your organization has created, it will not promote company success.

Here are some tips for getting more out of content promotion:

- Let bloggers, press, analysts and other influencers know about your content so they can share it with their followers via social media, blog posts and more.
- Consider creating a press release about the

- content or mentioning it in other press releases.
- Link your content's landing page with the rest of your website, adding it to an appropriate resource section. Also, consider creating banner ads about the content for your website or for the website homepage.
- Leverage your own company blog, sharing key takeaways from the content in a blog post so the reader understands the value of the content.
- Test multiple ads and keywords to get the most out of your paid search-marketing program. Don't just rely on the obvious.
- Remember, social media is more than Twitter. Use a variety of social media sites to spread information about your content including other microblogging sites, blogs, social networks (LinkedIn and Facebook) marking sites (Delicious), news sharing sites (Digg, Sphinn) and more.
- And finally, consider the program ROI needed and compare that to the cost of paid promotions to decide your strategy.

### Content Registration

Content marketing will include assets that are open and available without registration. However, in order for content marketing to be effective in lead generation, there must be a form to capture contact information. While these forms can be embedded in frames or placed in emails, you will mostly likely put your forms on a landing page.

Often marketers create successful content but do not achieve optimal results because of their landing pages. Landing pages are critical to content and should feature the benefits of the asset in an attractive way that encourages download. If a piece of content isn't doing well you will often want to explore landing page optimization before changing the content, as it may be the reason you are not doing as well as you'd like.

Landing page optimization can be very complex and include A/B testing, multivariate testing, eye-tracking studies, usability tests, click-mapping and more. Don't let this overwhelm you. Instead, start with some landing page optimization basics, like testing headings or images, and then work to more complicated testing procedures. To learn more about landing page optimization, check out

### [Building Effective Landing Pages.](#)

In addition to having well-constructed landing pages, consider the registration form itself. The questions on a form can greatly impact the actual download of a paper. Best practice is to keep the form as short as possible, e.g. only asking for name, company name and email address. If you ask for additional information like city, phone number, title and company size, you may reduce the actual number of people who view the asset. Try at all costs to not ask for very personal information or information that cannot be recalled easily from memory. Test to discover the maximum set of information your prospects find reasonable, allowing you to collect as much data as possible before registrants decline.

### Lead Nurturing

Lead nurturing is about maintaining an ongoing conversation with your prospects. In this case, the conversation advances via the marketing assets you use as well as the way in which your company communicates with prospects. Content plays a critical role in lead nurturing, as it often acts as a sales rep's proxy when a person is not yet sales ready.

Here are some additional best practices for developing content optimized for lead nurturing:

#### **Respect your prospect's schedule and attention span — make your content easy to digest**

Just as the B2B buying process has changed, so have the ways that prospects interact with the content you provide. If you're lucky enough to have them look at your content, you better make it engaging—which in most cases means it has to be short, sweet and to the point.

#### **Make content valuable, not self-promotional**

When creating content, make sure you put your audience's interests ahead of your own. People understand that if they are reading a vendor-sponsored or vendor-written resource, the material probably alludes to what the vendor's product or service can do.

#### **Use sales and marketing emails as a chance to get personal, not pushy**

The content or dialogue in your communication

with prospects is an important consideration with lead nurturing. Use HTML emails to nurture leads, then follow up corporate emails with more personal, text-only emails from sales.

### Lead Scoring

In demand generation, marketing not only generates new names that may be interested in your organization's product or service, they also triage those leads, either manually or via a defined business process that identifies it as a lead that is ready for sales' attention. This assessment may be based on the actions they took to become a lead, the demographics of the lead or their behavior after the lead is created. This sales ready lead is then passed to the sales department to continue the lead lifecycle process.

Lead scoring is the process of ranking a lead's level of interest and sales readiness according to a methodology agreed upon by marketing and sales. This process is essential in demand generation because, on average, only 25% of new leads are sales ready. Therefore, you need a way to find the hot leads and pass them to sales before a competitor moves in or they go cold. Additionally, a 10% increase in lead quality results in a 40% increase in sales productivity.

Scoring means passing fewer, but higher quality, leads to sales. This means win rates and revenue improve, and sales reps don't waste their time on leads that do not have actionable results. Rather than wasting time on low quality leads, reps can focus their time on the high quality leads and acquire more wins.

For a B2B marketer, the prospect's qualification is best defined not only by their words, but by their actions. For example, at ABC Didgets, Sue scores a prospect's engagement, including their incoming activity (the lead source), which emails they respond to, which forms they complete, as well as the pages they visit on the company's website. For example:

Activity	Score
Clicks link in email	+3
Completes form	+5
Visits product benefits page	+3
Visits any company web or blog page	+1

If a marketer did not have content for emails, landing pages, product pages and the website, as in the example above, none of this scoring would be possible.

### Developing Content to Generate Demand

Relevance is the key to creating content for demand generation that impacts lead generation, lead nurturing and lead scoring. Relevance does not only mean writing one paper that is useful to someone about to buy your product or service. Not all prospects are ready for this content or trust your company's information. Instead, you must create multiple pieces of content relevant to buyer roles and buyer stages, enticing a lead to engage with your content multiple times during the buying cycle.

### Buying Role

When we speak of buying roles we are specifically talking about the procurement responsibility of the prospect. Typically this describes their level of influence over the purchase, like user, influencer or CXO. Mapping your content to buying role is important because prospects find content targeted to their role or industry much more valuable than generic content.

According to research firm MarketingSherpa:

- 82% of prospects say content targeted to their specific industry is more valuable
- 67% say content targeted to their job function is more valuable
- 49% say content targeted to their company size is more valuable
- 29% prefer content targeted to their geography

### Buying Stage

Buying stage describes where your prospect stands in the buying process. This is important to content marketing for demand generation because it will impact the type of content the prospect is likely to consume. The content someone finds relevant changes as they move through the process. You must have the right information available to that prospect so they can further develop their interest in your product or service.

**Content marketing is used to score leads as they consume information about your company, your industry or other thought leadership, helping identify if and when they are sales ready.**

For example:

- Educational pieces work well during the early awareness stages. With these pieces, you are simply educating people and sharing best practices.
- Industry-specific pieces work well just as prospects start looking for a solution. Examples can be industry overviews, analyst reports, buyer's guides, etc.
- Solution-oriented and company-focused materials are appropriate for prospects engaged in an active buying cycle.

The goal of this matrix is to provide you with an at-a-glance resource for determining the structure of your content marketing. By completing this matrix, you'll ensure that your content marketing components — [buyer roles](#) and [buying stages](#) — are effectively aligned with each other so that you can communicate in the most relevant way with your prospects according to their buying stage. Each intersection of the matrix should map out the content

to share, according to buyer profile and stage — ideally you want to fill out each grid box with multiple pieces of content over time.

In this section you will be able to map your buying processes and stages to your current content to see where you are missing key demand generation materials that need to be developed by your marketing team.

Most companies will have at best two or three pieces of content for each cell, and will have many blank cells at the beginning. That's fine — you can get started with the content you already have. Over time, you will want multiple pieces of content for each cell, so use the blank spaces to build out your content roadmap.

Be sure to provide enough detail about topic, format and length to help ensure that the information makes sense within the context of your overall plan.

## Buying Stages

In this example, we'll use the buying cycle stages outlined by SiriusDecisions.

Stages:	1 Loosening the status quo	2 Committing to Change	3 Exploring Possible Solutions	4 Committing to a Solution	5 Justifying the Decision	6 Making the Selection
A						
B						
C						

## Your Turn

Insert the stages of your company's buying cycle stages here, adding or deleting as necessary.

Stages:	1	2	3	4	5	6
A						
B						
C						

## Buying Roles

Insert Buyer Roles. Let's use the roles suggested by SiriusDecisions.

Stages:	1 Loosening the status quo	2 Committing to Change	3 Exploring Possible Solutions	4 Committing to a Solution	5 Justifying the Decision	6 Making the Selection
Champion						
User						
CXO						
IT						

## Your Turn

Insert the buyer roles of your company here, adding or deleting as necessary.

Stages:	1	2	3	4	5	6
A						
B						
C						
D						

## Content

Finally, let's map your content into the cells of the matrix. For each grid box be as specific as you can about your content and list as many resources as you can that would be relevant for each person and buying stage.

Stages:	1	2	3	4	5	6
A						
B						
C						
D						

### The Three Rs of Content

#### Marketing Optimization

Many marketers are faced with content marketing challenges because of materials that are out of date, out of place or inappropriate for your target audience. In this case, the marketer must use the three Rs of content marketing optimization:

- **Reorganize** – when you reorganize content, you are taking pieces of existing content and restructuring it in a way that is more useful to your prospects or customers. This is a great way for companies who have lots of information but not a lot of structured content available for their prospects. There are many ways to do this, like compiling blog and web content in a white paper, or by using brochure content as the foundation for a new video.
- **Rewrite** – companies often find it useful to rewrite content when the content they have is either dated or has been exhausted due to a high level of previous consumption. When this happens, it

is often recommended to rewrite your content.

Rewrites are often less time consuming than creating new content but will still need time and attention to execute properly. When rewriting you want to ensure you follow the [six rules of content marketing](#) to ensure the rewrite is compelling and more successful than the original.

- **Retire** – every piece of content will have a limited shelf life. This means that you cannot use the same content indefinitely. If content isn't performing as well as it should, or if its consumption has significantly decreased and you do not think it will be useful to reorganize or rewrite, then it is time to retire it from your content library. This may be obvious with papers that are specific to a certain date or event, like a list of events that happened during a specific year or lessons learned from a specific trade show, but it will also be important even when less obvious events occur, such as changing trends that cause a topic to no longer be of interest.

## More than just White Papers

Earlier it was mentioned that podcasts, webinars, presentations, widgets and more could all be used as content for demand generation. This is surprising to many marketers, as typically when we think of content we think about documents like white papers, eBooks, articles and case studies.

Marketers who are getting the most out of their content are utilizing all the different types of content to generate demand. There are a number of reasons for this:

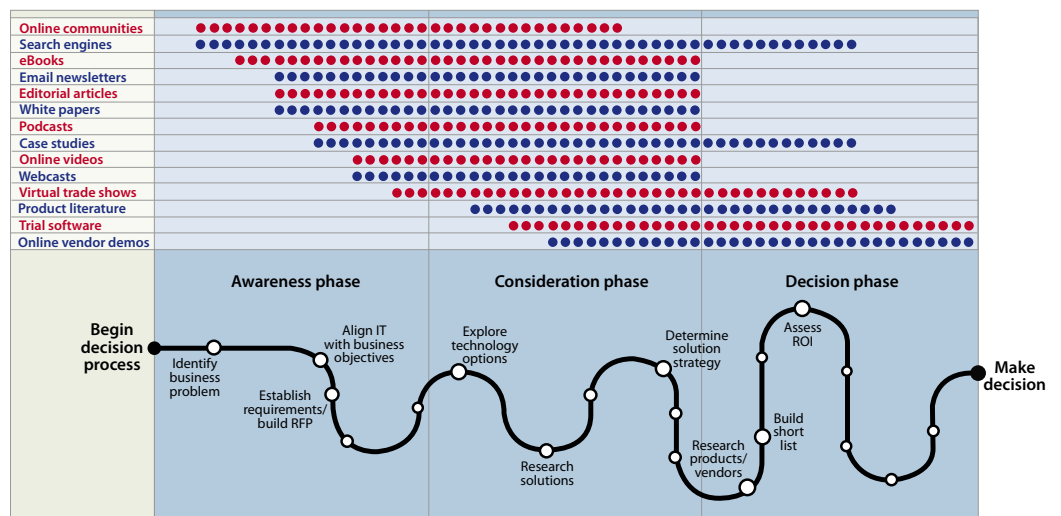
- Your prospects will all have their own preferred way of consuming content, causing you to miss many potential interactions with prospects if you only offer one type of content.
- Utilizing research or information on one topic of interest in many content formats will allow you to get more return out of your content development.
- Different types of content may give you a competitive edge, making you appear as a thought leader or appear as if you have dedicated more time to the creation of your content.
- The type of content consumed by prospects changes as they go through their buying stages, causing prospects to search for information via competitors if they don't find what they need through your thought leadership.

## The ROI of Content Marketing

True Return on Investment (ROI) for content marketing in demand generation would be a measure of the profit earned from your content marketing program. Essentially, it would be the return you receive from creating and distributing content. But since your content does not earn a direct return, you can not accurately calculate this value without looking at all the sales and marketing that contributed to a sale.

To do this, you must look at the campaigns the content is used in and evaluate the affect of these campaigns on the organization's revenue. Then you must attribute a percentage of this success to the content used in these campaigns. This is because the success of these campaigns is only partially due to the content itself. Other factors creating the program success may include:

- Emails distributing content
- Social media marketing
- Sales reps sharing content
- Search engine optimization
- Pay per click advertising
- Content syndication
- Trade shows where content is distributed
- Branding and reputation
- Other content\*



[From Google/TechTarget 2009 Media Consumption Report](#)

\*Other content includes information the prospect consumed outside of the campaign including content from partners, analysts, bloggers, press and competitors. This is because their content may be influencing the purchase of your product in addition to the content you have distributed.

In addition to looking at the success of content by campaign, you should begin to measure campaign influence. By looking at which pieces of content are most frequently consumed by successful opportunities (sold deals), you can see what content is most useful to prospects.

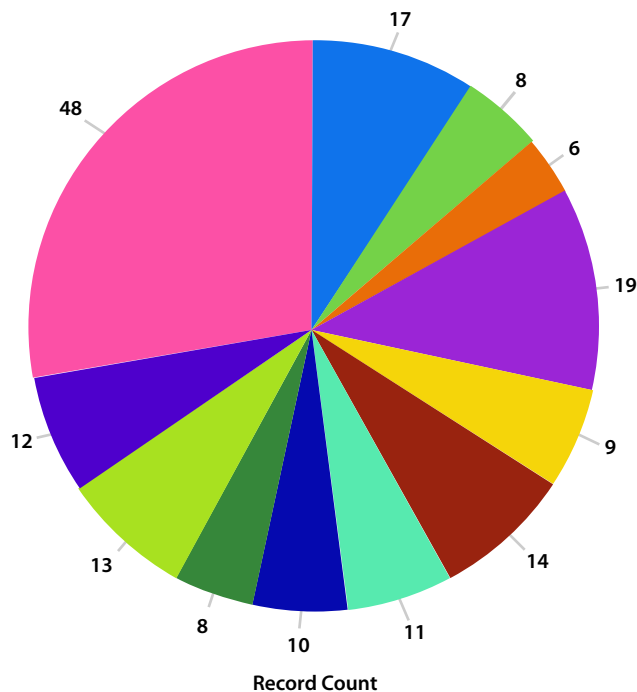
In the example below from [Demandbase](#), the Q3 data offer was their most influential campaign. The

content used in this campaign is therefore considered to have a higher value to the organization than the content in their October data offer, which has less influence.

Other measurements of content success that you can use include the number of times each piece of content is viewed and lead source of your new leads, of your contacts and of your opportunities.

One note of caution: be careful not to attribute the last piece of content viewed as the most successful content. Organizations that do this find that their results are skewed based on the time they distribute content. For example, if 40% of your business closes in Q4 and you release a new white paper just as

### Won Opportunity Campaign Influence



- 2009.09.17 September Data Offer Follow Up From Rep
- 2009.10.07 October Data Offer (Extension)
- 2009 Email: 06.02 NEW DATA Sales & Marketing
- 2009 Email: Demandbase Q3 Data Offer Email
- 2009 Email: eNewsletter 06/01
- 2009 Email: eNewsletter 08/01
- 2009 Email: eNewsletter 10/2009
- 2009 Email: New Data July 2009 Purchasers
- 2009 Email: New Data Sales/Marketing June (1.5M)
- 2009 Email: New Data Summer Offer from Sales Rep
- Email: Registered User Nurture Program
- Other



the quarter begins it may appear that this content is most critical, though in reality it is just the one promoted prior to the close of many deals that had already been developing in your sales funnel.

### Continue the Conversation and Learn More

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### About Marketo

Marketo is the fastest growing provider of marketing automation and best practices. Marketo's uncompromising on-demand solutions enable marketing and sales teams to collaborate throughout the revenue cycle, from the earliest stages of demand generation and lead management to the pursuit of revenue and customer loyalty.

Marketo Lead Management gives Marketers the power and flexibility to automate demand generation campaigns and deliver high quality sales leads with less effort, while Marketo Sales Insight helps Sales understand, prioritize and interact with the hottest leads and opportunities to close business faster. Known for providing the most innovative user experience and the fastest time to value, Marketo was voted 'Best Marketing Automation Application' by Salesforce customers on the Force.com AppExchange. As of June 2009, more than 200 mid-market and enterprise companies in nine countries have selected Marketo.

Agree or disagree with parts of this paper? Let us know.

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While the focus of this paper was specific to content marketing for demand generation, content marketing can also be used to improve SEO, as sales collateral, as website information and more. To learn more about content marketing for these purposes, check out:

- [Marketo Modern B2B Marketing Blog](#)
- [Marketo Resource Center](#)
- [Idealaunch 101 Content Marketing Tips](#)
- [Velocity Partners B2B Content Marketing Workbook](#)



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